
BEACH

Overview

Dominated by sand and shells, one usually thinks of the beach as barren. A little closer investigation will prove otherwise. There were animals that once lived in those shells, and there are animals living now within the sand. Terns, gulls and pelicans; winged residents, are also common inhabitants of this environment.

One of the largest turtles, the threatened loggerhead sea turtle can be seen coming to shore at night to lay her eggs during the summer months. Once hatched, the young scurry to the water and begin their challenging lives in the vast ocean.

On the landward rim of the beach, dunes form and are anchored by tufts of sea oats and other dune grasses.

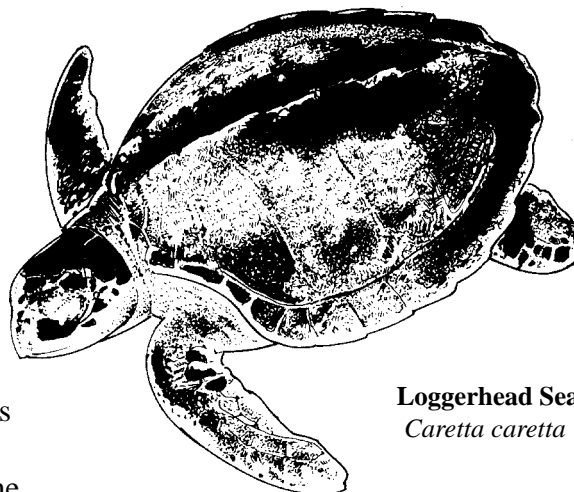
Species Checklist

Animals

angel wing
brown pelican
ghost crab
horseshoe crab
laughing gull
loggerhead sea turtle
merlin
moon snail
pen shell
piping plover
terns
whelks

Plants

sea lavender
sea oats
sea lettuce



Loggerhead Sea Turtle

Caretta caretta

Vocabulary

anchor
Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway
barren
dune
hatchery
lighthouse
marauding
predation
sand fence
threatened

Important Messages



The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service protects the fragile beach habitats by installing sand fences to help keep dunes anchored. It is illegal to pick, cut, or attempt to transplant sea oats.



To protect loggerhead sea turtle nests from beach erosion and raccoon predation, they are moved to protected hatcheries.



A hundred years ago, before the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, lighthouses served as navigational aids for mariners. Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge has two historic lighthouses. There are many colorful legends of pirates and their crews which marauded ships in this area.

